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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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GOLDEN NEMATODE CONTROL

NATURE OF THE PEST

The golden nematode is a microscopic eelworm which attacks potato roots and saps plant vitality, making potato production unprofitable in infested fields. It is considered the most destructive pest of potatoes. The cyst or overwintering form, can remain viable in soil for many years. Despite much research here and in Europe, no effective eradication methods are known. Rigid quarantine enforcement has thus far confined it to Long Island. The pest can be spread by wind, on potatoes, in burlap containers, on farm machinery, and in soil.

CROPS AFFECTED

This pest attacks potatoes and tomatoes.

DAMAGE AND ESTIMATED LOSSES

Vigorous survey, quarantine enforcement and retirement from potato production of infested land has prevented potential damage to potato or tomato crops in this country. Losses due to idle land can be estimated at about \$100,000 in 1953. Potential loss, if the pest were not restrained, would be tremendous.

CONTROL PROGRAM

A cooperative Federal-State program to prevent spread of this potato pest from the established infested area on Long Island, New York is under way. It provides for retirement of infested fields from potato production and for surveys of major potato areas in all potato States to discover if infestation may be established there. Farmers are compensated for not growing potatoes in infested fields, one-third of the indemnity being borne by the Federal Government, one-third by the State, and one-third by the farmer himself. The Federal Government also aids New York State in enforcement of its quarantine which regulates movement of potatoes, soil, nursery stock, burlap, etc.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Authority to control and prevent the spread of this pest is included in the Plant Quarantine Act of 1912, as amended (7 U.S.C. 151-167) pertaining to domestic plant quarantines, and the Golden Nematode Act of 1948 (7 U.S.C. 150-150g). The last citation provides the authority for indemnity payments to farmers.

July 7, 1954





